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SHOSHONE - EUREKA

Resource Management Plan Amendment
Record of Decision

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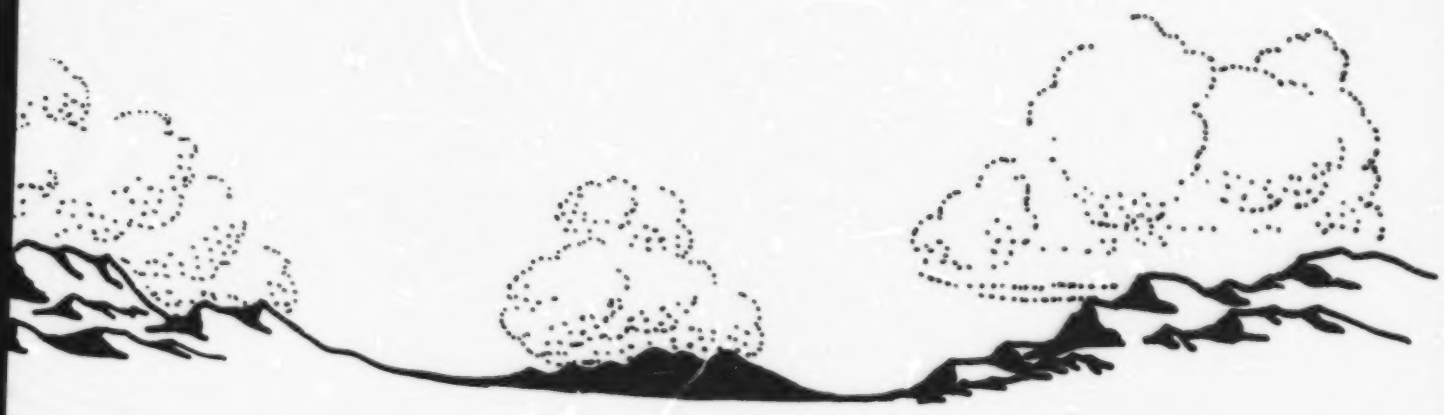

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Bureau of Land Management
Battle Mountain District Office
Battle Mountain, Nevada

ORIGINAL

IN REPLY REFER TO:

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

NEVADA STATE OFFICE

850 Harvard Way
P.O. Box 12000
Reno, Nevada 89520

1602.31
(NV-060)

November 6, 1987

Dear Reader:

Enclosed for your information is a copy of the Record of Decision (ROD) for the Shoshone-Eureka Resource Management Plan (RMP) Amendment. This ROD is the approval of the Shoshone-Eureka RMP Amendment and it completes the process which included the development of a draft and final management plan amendment and associated environmental impact statements (EIS). All of the planning documents are available for review by the public at the Battle Mountain, Nevada, BLM District Office.

Part I of the ROD displays the management decisions to be implemented as a part of the planning process. The management decision summary, Part II, provides a detailed summary of the decisions which includes the objectives, management actions, standard operating procedures, and implementation strategies for the management plan amendment. This ROD also reflects changes suggested by the public and those which occurred as a result of internal review.

A Rangeland Program Summary (RPS) will be issued during the next twelve months. This document will outline the implementation of the rangeland management program and will inform interested persons of rangeland planning decisions for the Shoshone-Eureka Resource Area. The RPS will identify the initial and subsequent objective levels of livestock grazing use. It will identify allotment specific objectives and outline the range improvement program needed to meet these objectives. It will also outline the monitoring program upon which each allotment's grazing use will be evaluated. Periodic updates of the RPS will be issued as the rangeland management program is implemented.

The next phase of the RMP/EIS process is the implementation phase. Grazing Allotment Management Plans (AMPs), wildlife habitat management plans (HMPs), and wild horse herd management area plans (HMAPs) will be developed. Once these plans are developed and approved, work will commence on the ground.

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Please be aware that the planning process does not end with the ROD. One of the requirements of BLM planning is a review process to determine whether the plan is still current and the objectives are being met. The Shoshone-Eureka RMP Amendment shall be reviewed on a minimum of five year intervals for adequacy. As a result of the review process, this plan may be updated. This will be done through a public process. The Battle Mountain (BLM) District Office should always be consulted if questions arise concerning this management plan.

Sincerely,

Edward F. Spang
State Director, Nevada

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RECORD OF DECISION

SHOSHONE-EUREKA RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENT

Shoshone-Eureka Resource Area
Battle Mountain, Nevada

INTRODUCTION

The Proposed Shoshone-Eureka Resource Management Plan (RMP) Amendment and Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) is approved as written.

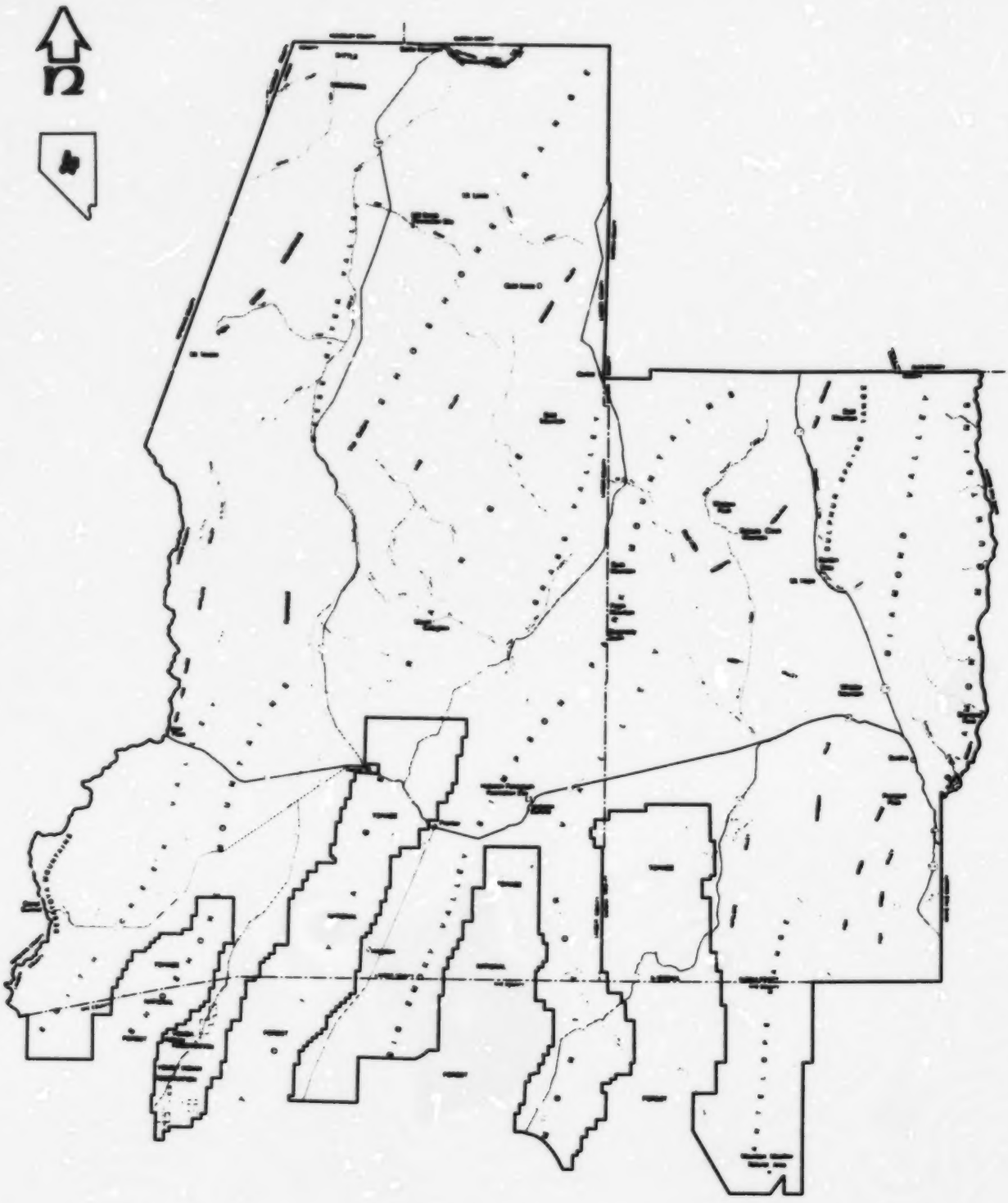
The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Director, in response to protests to the proposed Shoshone-Eureka RMP and FEIS of January 27, 1984 (INT EIS 84-2), identified a need to re-examine the grazing allotment categorization from the Draft RMP/EIS. Re-examination of the criteria used to categorize livestock grazing allotments resulted in the deletion of one criterion (Funding and Manpower Capability). The elimination of the one criterion, along with some new information on condition and trend, prompted a recategorization of allotments. This recategorization added 14 more allotments to the "I" (Improve) category for a total of 28 allotments. An assessment of these categorization changes indicated there are significant differences in impacts between the allotment categorization and the associated management actions in the current RMP of January 27, 1984, and the recategorization of allotments and the associated management actions proposed in this amendment. The changes in management actions associated with the recategorization of allotments were significant enough to require an amendment to the RMP, including assessment through an environmental impact statement.

The Battle Mountain District of the BLM will begin implementing those management actions documented in the RMP Amendment Record of Decision that will manage the livestock use and impacts on wildlife habitat from livestock grazing on a high percentage of the Shoshone-Eureka Resource Area (see Map 1) currently managed as Maintain and Custodial Category Allotments. This Record of Decision (ROD) will be used with the Shoshone-Eureka RMP ROD signed and approved on February 26, 1986.

PART I - MANAGEMENT DECISIONS

A. RESOURCE DECISIONS

Issue	Management Actions
1. Livestock Grazing	
a. Short-Term Management Actions	(1) Livestock use may be licensed up to active preference (300,572 Animal Unit Months (AUMs)). However initial licensed use by livestock is anticipated to continue at the 5-year (1977-1981) average licensed use levels (239,717 AUMs), which is 20 percent below active preference.



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MAP 1

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Bureau of Land Management

SHOSHONE - EUREKA
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENT
RECORD OF DECISION

LOCATION MAP

1987

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(2) Continue existing rangeland monitoring studies and establish new studies as necessary to determine what adjustments in livestock use and wild horse numbers are needed to meet the objectives of this amendment.

Actions could include, but will not be limited to, change in seasons-of-use, implementation of deferment and rest rotation grazing systems, change in livestock numbers, correction of livestock distribution problems, adjust the number of wild horses, and development of range improvements. Specific measures to improve wildlife habitat could include, but will not be limited to, restricting livestock use along streams to late summer or fall, limiting grazing use on riparian areas to moderate levels, fencing meadows and stream corridors, limiting grazing use on bitterbrush to moderate levels by winter in crucial mule deer winter range, constructing wildlife guzzlers for water, and planting desirable shrub and forb species in vegetation manipulation projects.

(3) Implement allotment management plans on ten allotments in the "Improve" category (see Map 2).

The projects needed to support these plans are described below and summarized by allotment in Table 1.

Develop 16 reservoirs to provide water in areas where there are no other sources of available water. The additional water would be made available to livestock, wildlife, and wild horses to encourage more even utilization of vegetation.

Develop 21 springs to promote better distribution of livestock for more even utilization of vegetation. This action would include the installation of 20 miles of pipeline and 36 water troughs.

Construct 222 miles of fence to foster better distribution of livestock for more even utilization of vegetation. This action would include installation of 15 cattle guards.

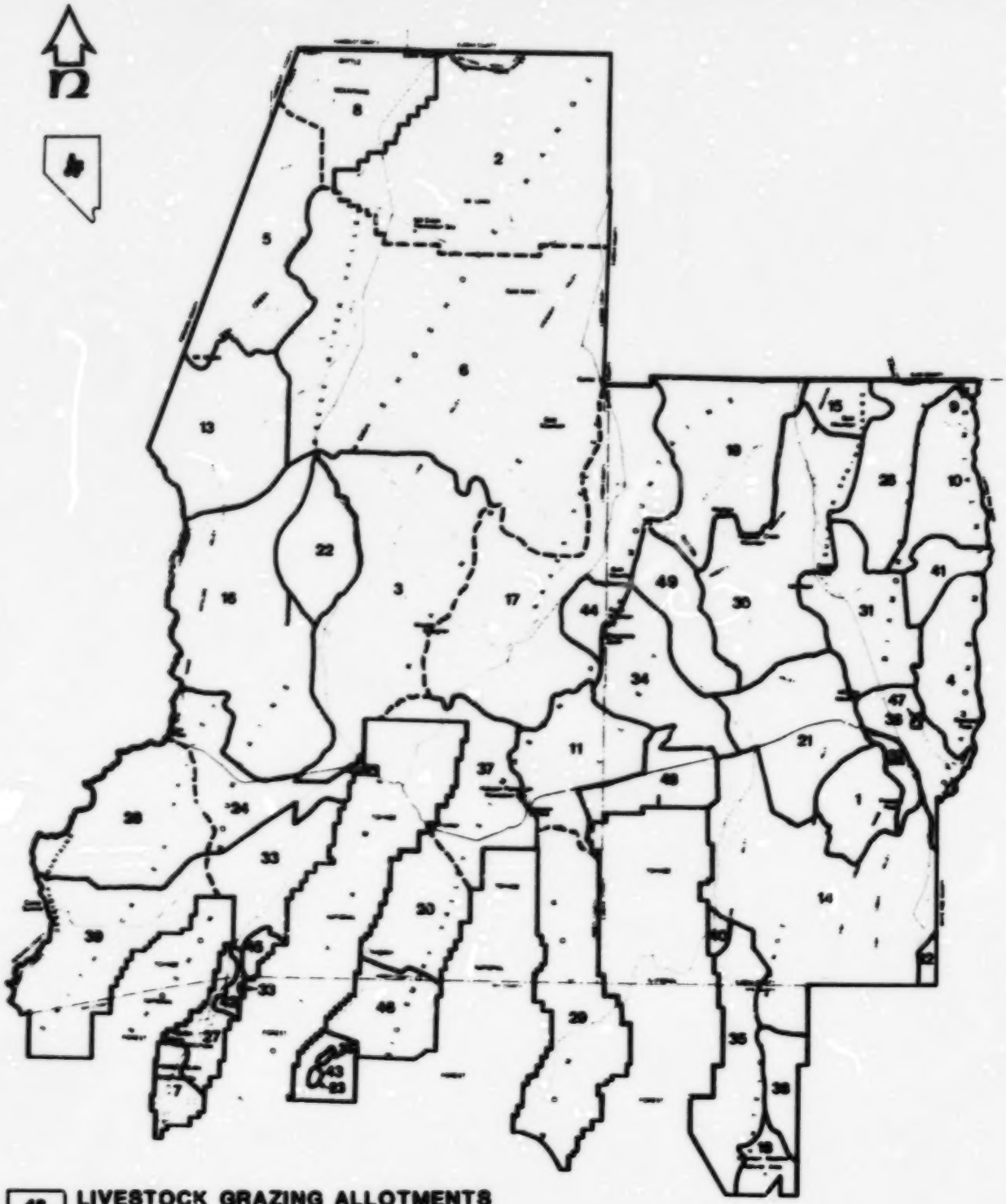
Manipulate 7,500 acres of vegetation by plowing, burning, spraying and seeding, or reseeding, to increase available forage for livestock, wild horses, and big game and improve water infiltration and holding capacity of the soil. The areas would be fenced to allow establishment of the seeded species.

b. Long-Term Management Actions

(1) Implement 18 additional AMPs on "Improve" category allotments by the end of the long-term (see Map 2). Table 1 also lists anticipated range improvement projects by allotment for the long-term.

(2) Continue the rangeland monitoring program and make necessary adjustments in grazing use to achieve the objectives of this amendment.

As a result of long-term management actions, available forage is projected to increase by 22,783 AUMs above the 5-year average licensed use.



MAP 2

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Bureau of Land Management

SHOSHONE - EUREKA
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENT
RECORD OF DECISION

LIVESTOCK GRAZING ALLOTMENTS

1987

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MAP LEGEND

LIVESTOCK GRAZING ALLOTMENTS

MAP SYMBOL	LIVESTOCK ALLOTMENTS	
1	Arambel	
*2	Argenta	(LT)
*3	Austin	(ST)
*4	Black Point	(ST)
*5	Buffalo Valley	(LT)
*6	Carico Lake	(LT)
*7	Clear Creek	(LT)
*8	Copper Canyon	(LT)
9	Corta	
*10	Diamond Springs	(ST)
*11	Dry Creek	(ST)
12	Duckwater Indians	
*13	Cottonwood	(LT)
*14	Fish Creek Ranch	(ST)
*15	Flynn	(LT)
*16	Gilbert Creek	(ST)
*17	Grass Valley	(ST)
18	Hicks Station	
19	J.D.	
20	Kingston	
21	Lucky C.	
22	Manhattan Mountain	
23	Millet Ranch	
24	Mt. Airy	
25	Nielson	
26	North Diamond	
27	O'Toole Ranches	
*28	Porter Canyon	(LT)
*29	Potts	(LT)
*30	Roberts Mountain	(ST)
*31	Romano	(LT)
32	Ruby Hill	
33	San Juan	
*34	Santa Fe Ferguson	(LT)
*35	Seven Mile	(ST)
*36	Shannon Station/ Spanish Gulch	(LT)
*37	Simpson Park	(LT)
38	Snowball	
*39	South Smith Cr.	(LT)
*40	Sweeny Wash	(LT)
*41	Three Mile	(LT)
*42	Tierney Creek	(LT)
43	Trail Canyon	
*44	Underwood	(LT)
45	Washington Cr.	
46	Wildcat Canyon	
47	Willow Racetrack	
48	Willow Ranch	
*49	Three Bar	(ST)

*"Improve" Category Allotments
(ST) Short-Term
(LT) Long-Term

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B. RATIONALE FOR RMP DECISIONS

This RMP amendment provides an approach to livestock grazing management for the approximately 4.4 million acres of public land in the Shoshone-Eureka Resource Area. This amendment provides for protecting fragile and unique resource values, such as riparian and stream habitat, while not overly restricting the ability of the other resources to provide for the production of commodity values on the public lands. This amendment provides a framework for the future management of livestock grazing on the public lands in the Shoshone-Eureka Resource Area that is consistent with existing legislation, regulations, and the policy and management of public lands on the basis of multiple-use and sustained-yield.

C. SUMMARY OF ALTERNATIVES

The Shoshone-Eureka Draft RMP/EIS Amendment considered and analyzed two alternatives. They are briefly summarized below.

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the Shoshone-Eureka RMP would be implemented as directed in the Record of Decision issued in March 1986.

The Proposed Amendment

This amendment displays one way to manage livestock grazing use and wildlife habitat needs in the Shoshone-Eureka Resource Area. Sensitive resource values would be protected. This is the environmentally preferred alternative.

D. MITIGATING MEASURES

No specific mitigating measures are identified. Any adverse environmental impacts will be minimized through the use of the standard operating procedures presented in Part II of this document. Those measures will be strictly enforced during implementation. The effects of implementing the decisions outlined in this document will be monitored and evaluated on a periodic basis to assure that the desired results are being achieved. These monitoring and evaluation procedures are presented in Part II of this document.

E. RECORD OF DECISION

This document meets the requirement for a Record of Decision as provided in 40 CFR 1505.2.

F. APPROVAL

Edward F. Spang, Nevada State Director — Date 10/13/87

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TABLE 1

KEY MANAGEMENT ACTIONS OF THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT BY RESOURCE CONFLICT AREA

ISSUE/Action	South Shoshone RCA[1]	North Shoshone RCA	Eureka RCA	Southern Valley RCA	Shoshone-Eureka Resource Area
LIVESTOCK:					
Initial level of use (5-Year average licensed use) [2]	90,236	16,355	107,942	25,184	239,717
Licensed use as a result of livestock actions in the					
Short-Term	90,236	16,355	107,942	25,184	239,717
Short-and Long-Term	99,081	17,827	118,198	27,394	262,500
Number of allotment management plans					
Short-Term	2	0	8	0	10
Long-Term	5	2	8	3	18
Total	7	2	16	3	28
Number of water developments [3]					
Short-Term	14	0	23	0	37
Long-Term	36	22	43	12	113
Total	50	22	66	12	150
Miles of fence [3]					
Short-Term	105	0	117	0	222
Long-Term	101	130	208	86	525
Total	206	130	325	86	747
Acres of vegetation manipulation [3]					
Short-Term	2,150	0	5,350	0	7,500
Long-Term	4,250	0	3,925	2,000	10,175
Total	6,400	0	9,275	2,000	17,675
Cost of livestock improvement projects [3] ($)					
Short-Term	407,900	0	597,800	0	1,005,700
Long-Term	720,250	527,800	1,034,375	382,400	2,664,825
Total	1,128,150	527,800	1,632,175	382,400	3,670,525

1/ Resource Conflict Areas
2/ Animal Unit Months
3/ The number of projects displayed is limited to those the resource area anticipates could be funded with range betterment funds only, and therefore does not include any funding through other public or private contributions. The resource area estimate of range betterment funding available annually is approximately $200,000.

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PART II - MANAGEMENT DECISION SUMMARY

A. RESOURCE DECISIONS

1. Livestock Grazing

a. Objectives

(1) Manage livestock use at 239,717 animal unit months (AUMs) (5-year average use) in the short-term and determine if such use can be maintained. In the long-term, manage livestock use at 262,500 AUMs.

(2) To establish a grazing management program designed to provide key forage plants with adequate rest from grazing during critical growth periods.

(3) To achieve, through management of livestock and wild horses, utilization levels consistent with those recommended by the Nevada Rangeland Monitoring Handbook to allow more plants to complete growth cycles and to increase storage of reserves for future growth.

(4) In the long-term, improve ecological condition of 585,191 acres to good condition, and 25,990 acres to excellent condition.

(5) In the long-term, stop downward trends in ecological condition on 464,873 acres and manage for upward trends on 634,868 acres.

(6) In the long-term, improve and maintain 133,075 acres of big game habitat in good condition and 6,104 acres in excellent condition.

(7) In the long-term, stop downward trends on 65,702 acres of big game habitat and manage for upward trends on 144,186 acres.

(8) In the short-term, improve and maintain in good or better condition, 64 miles of aquatic habitat and 768 acres of riparian habitat associated with the streams and an additional 1,067 acres of other meadows, springs, and aspen groves.

(9) In the long-term, improve and maintain in good or better condition, a total of 84.8 miles of aquatic habitat and 1,018 acres of riparian habitat associated with the streams and an additional 1,414 acres of other meadows, springs, and aspen groves.

b. Short-Term Management Actions

(1) Livestock use may be licensed up to active preference (300,572 AUMs). However initial licensed use by livestock is anticipated to continue at the 5-year (1977-1981) average licensed use levels (239,717 AUMs), which is 20 percent below active preference.

(2) Continue existing rangeland monitoring studies and establish new studies as necessary to determine what adjustments in livestock use and wild horse numbers are needed to meet the objectives of this amendment.

Actions could include, but will not be limited to, change in seasons-of-use, implementation of deferment and rest rotation grazing systems, change in livestock numbers, correction of livestock distribution problems, alteration of the number of wild horses, and development of range improvements. Specific measures to improve wildlife habitat could include, but will not be limited to, restricting livestock use along streams to late summer or fall, limiting grazing use on riparian areas to moderate levels, fencing meadows and stream corridors, limiting grazing use on bitterbrush to moderate levels by winter in crucial mule deer winter range, constructing wildlife guzzlers for water, and planting desirable shrub and forb species in vegetation manipulation projects.

(3) Implement allotment management plans on ten allotments in the "Improve" category (see Map 2).

The projects needed to support these plans are described below and summarized by allotment in Table 1.

Develop 16 reservoirs to provide water in areas where there are no other sources of available water. The additional water would be made available to livestock, wildlife, and wild horses to encourage more even utilization of vegetation.

Develop 21 springs to promote better distribution of livestock for more even utilization of vegetation. This action would include the installation of 20 miles of pipeline and 36 water troughs.

Construct 222 miles of fence to foster better distribution of livestock for more even utilization of vegetation. This action would include installation of 15 cattle guards.

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Manipulate 7,500 acres of vegetation by plowing, burning, spraying and seeding, or reseeding, to increase available forage for livestock, wild horses, and big game and improve water infiltration and holding capacity of the soil. The areas would be fenced to allow establishment of the seeded species.

c. Long-Term Management Actions

(1) Implement 18 additional AMPs on "Improve" category allotments by the end of the long-term (see Map 2). Table 1 also lists anticipated range improvement projects by allotment for the long-term.

(2) Continue the rangeland monitoring program and make necessary adjustments in grazing use to achieve the objectives of this amendment.

As a result of long-term management actions, available forage is projected to increase by 22,783 AUMs above the 5-year average licensed use.

d. Standard Operating Procedures

Development of the above range improvement projects will comply with the standard operating procedures (SOP) resulting from existing Bureau policies and regulations and from various laws. The following is a list of these SOPs:

(1) All projects will require an environmental assessment prior to implementation. If through the environmental assessment, it is determined that significant impacts would occur, the project will be modified, abandoned, or deferred until an environmental impact statement is completed (National Environmental Policy Act of 1969).

(2) Generally, permanent roads will not be constructed to project sites. Use will be made of existing access, off-road travel, or temporary roads which would be rehabilitated after construction activity.

(3) Cultural resource protection will require compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, Section 101(b)(4) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, and the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978.

Prior to project approval, intensive field inventories will be conducted at project sites. If cultural or paleontological sites are found, every effort will be made to avoid adverse impacts. However, where that is not possible, the Bureau will consult with the State Historic Preservation

Officer and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation in accordance with the Programmatic Memorandum of Agreement between the Bureau and the Council, dated January 14, 1980.

(4) All actions will be in compliance with the Bureau's visual resource management design procedures. For any project that would have a visual contrast rating in excess of the recommended maximum for the visual class zone in which it is proposed, the visual contrast will be considered significant and the need for mitigating measures will be examined.

(5) Construction of all fences will conform with the objectives and specifications in Bureau Manual H-1741-1 to assure a minimum of impacts to wildlife, wild horses, recreation, and visual resources.

(6) The clearing of vegetation from project sites will be restricted to the minimum amount necessary.

(7) Application of herbicide, such as 2,4-D, on proposed treatment areas to reduce sagebrush and other plant species will be in accordance with procedure established in Bureau Manual 9222 and Nevada BLM 1732 manual supplement relative to coordination with Nevada Department of Wildlife and affected interests to ensure non-impairment of other than target species.

(8) All disturbed areas will be rehabilitated, where such action is necessary and practical, to replace ground cover and prevent erosion.

(9) Multiple-use concepts will be considered in all vegetation manipulations where livestock, wildlife, and wild horse use areas overlap.

(10) Maintenance of livestock management structures will be accomplished by livestock permittees through range improvement permits or cooperative agreements as specified in the Bureau's 1982 Rangeland Improvement Policy (USDI, BLM, Oct. 1982).

(11) Long-term air quality will be protected as all Bureau and Bureau- authorized activities must be designated to prevent air quality deterioration in excess of the established thresholds specified in the Nevada Ambient Air Quality Standards.

(12) Consultation with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service would be undertaken as directed by the Endangered Species Act (as amended) for any Bureau of Land Management action which may affect a Federally listed threatened or endangered species or its habitat.

(13) Water will be made available in allotments and rested pastures for wild horses and wildlife, wherever feasible.

(14) Spring improvement projects will be fenced where necessary and water will be piped away from the source to a trough or pond. Water will also be left at the spring source for wildlife use as required by Nevada Revised Statute 533.367.

(15) Water improvements will include bird ramps in watering troughs, and, where the need is identified for wildlife, may also include lateral water site off pipeline and overflows at troughs.

(16) Alteration of sagebrush areas either through application of herbicides, prescribed burning, or by mechanical means will be in accordance with procedures specified in the Western States Sage Grouse Guidelines (Western States Sage Grouse Committee, 1974) and the Memorandum of Understanding between the Nevada Department of Wildlife and Bureau of Land Management. All vegetation treatment projects will be coordinated with the Nevada Department of Wildlife at least one year in advance of implementation.

(17) Livestock grazing and wild horse use, where practical, will be deferred for at least two growing seasons on all new seeding projects to allow seeded species to become established.

(18) Appropriate actions will be taken on all wildfire occurrences within the planning area. A fire activity plan will be developed that identifies what the appropriate actions are under differing weather and fuel conditions.

e. Implementation

Livestock grazing allotment management plans (AMPs) will include grazing treatments. The grazing treatments will be designed to provide forage for consumptive use while maintaining proper and judicious use levels for key forage species.

The development of livestock grazing management procedures and projects will be coordinated through AMPs following the selective management policy. All projects are based upon estimated needs. The AMPs will determine the precise location and mixture of projects needed to meet management objectives.

B. AMENDMENTS

The Shoshone-Eureka Resource Management Plan and its amendments may be amended when there is a need to consider monitoring and evaluation findings; new data; new or revised policy; a change in the scope of resource uses; or a change in the terms, conditions, and decisions of the

approved plan, as amended by this document. Amendments may be made through such processes as environmental assessments or environmental impact statements (depending on the level of intensity of the change) and must meet all prescribed requirements of public involvement, coordination, and consistency.

C. MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THE PLAN

The resource management plan will be evaluated at five-year intervals to determine if there is sufficient cause to warrant revision or amendment. The evaluation will consist of a review of the issues, objectives, and management actions. The review will determine if these components are meeting the needs of management and define necessary changes as appropriate.

D. MANAGEMENT ACTIONS NOT EXPRESSLY ADDRESSED BY THIS RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENT

This resource management plan amendment is limited in scope to the livestock grazing issue. It is not intended to provide guidance for the management of all potential resource values and uses. Resource uses or management actions not mentioned in this amendment shall be clearly consistent with the terms, conditions and decisions of the Shoshone-Eureka Resource Area Record of Decision signed and approved February 26, 1986.

E. PROTEST PROCEDURES

Any person who participated in the planning process and has an interest which is or may be adversely affected by the approval or amendment of a resource management plan may protest such approval or amendment. A protest may raise only those issues which were submitted for the record during the planning process (43 Code of Federal Regulations 1610.5-2(a)).

F. RANGELAND PROGRAM SUMMARY

The Rangeland Program Summary will describe the allotment specific objectives for livestock, wild horses and burros, and wildlife. It will also discuss the monitoring and range improvement projects needed to meet these allotment objectives. Updates of the summary will explain and update monitoring efforts and results. This affects Livestock Grazing, Wild Horses and Burros and Wildlife Programs.

G. SUPPORT REQUIREMENTS

Activity planning is the appropriate place for discussion of support such as cadastral surveying and engineering design. Support varies from year-to-year with budget and manpower funding changes. Management may change the priority of and method of implementation from year-to-year, so a land use plan is not appropriate for detailed discussion of these operational decisions.

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